

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 18-34 are presently active in this case.

The outstanding Office Action rejected Claims 18-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Dow et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,310,929). Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Dow et al. in view of Walch et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,679,038).

Claims 28-34 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter.

In response to the rejections of Claims 18-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on the Dow et al. patent, Applicant hereby perfects its claim to foreign priority thereby removing the Dow et al. patent as prior art against the claims of the present application. See MPEP 201.15. The filing date of the Dow et al. patent is March 31, 2003. The priority date of the present application is March 17, 2003, prior to the effective date of the Dow et al. patent. A certified translation of the priority document of the present application is filed herewith. As can be seen from this translation, the rejected claims find support in the priority document so that they benefit from the priority filing date. Accordingly, the Dow et al. patent is not prior art against the rejected claims and the rejections based on the Dow et al. patent are believed to be overcome.

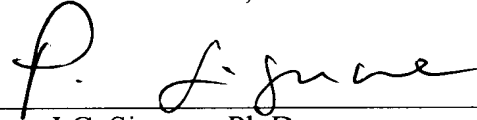
Consequently, in view of the present response, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 18-34 is earnestly solicited.

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Reply to Office Action of October 8, 2008

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. J. Signore", written over a horizontal line.

Philippe J.C. Signore, Ph.D.
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 43,922

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/07)